

FOLLOW THE RIGHT MENTOR

*Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?*ⁱ

A noted French naturalist, Jean Henri Fabre, studied the Processionary Caterpillar in great detail. What makes this caterpillar special is its instinct to follow in lock-step the caterpillar in front of it. This behavior, not only gives the caterpillar its name, but a deadly characteristic also.

Fabre demonstrated this unusual behavior with a simple experiment. He took a flowerpot and placed a number of caterpillars in single-file around the circumference of the pot's rim. Each caterpillar's head touched the caterpillar in front of it. Fabre then placed the caterpillars' favorite food in the middle of the circle created by the caterpillars' procession around the rim of the flowerpot.

Each caterpillar followed the one ahead probably thinking that it was heading for the food. Round and round went those silly creatures *for seven days!* After a week of

this mindless activity, the caterpillars started to drop dead because of exhaustion and starvation.

All that they had to do to avoid death was to stop the senseless circling of the flower pot and head directly toward the food – less than six inches away from those ever-circling crawlers. However, the Processionary Caterpillars were locked into this lifestyle of blindly following a leader headed nowhere and couldn't extricate themselves from the behavior.

As it was for the caterpillars so it is with some people. Some of us act like Processionary Caterpillars. Such people do not have personal visions and goals. They do not develop their potential. They do not think for themselves. They mindlessly follow someone else, or even a crowd, and that also without paying attention to where that crowd or person is headed. They are afraid of change. They do not take their own initiative. They are only comfortable with people that think and act *like them*. They are slaves to company and are afraid of being

alone. Because of this they produce only mediocre results because they cannot buy their future.

This of course can, and indeed, must change if you would *Buy Your Future*. Rather than follow blindly, seek the *right* mentor and follow. The first step for every aspect of human learning is imitation. A child imitates how her parents walk, talk, laugh, play, and even fight. If there are insults flying around at home you can be sure that the child will adopt them as fast as she can. If you want to make quick progress in any field, learn to imitate.

All leaders have been mentored by someone else. The day Novak Djokovic lost his place as tennis world number one to Rafael Nadal, he gave Boris Becker, one-time youngest ever player to win the Wimbledon Open, a call to become his trainer. He did this because he knew that to regain his top rank in world tennis he needed someone who has been there and done it. Today, Djokovic is world number one again.

Mentorship is a pattern for would-be champions. A mentor should be someone who would not only show you *what* but also *how* to achieve what you desire to achieve. In effect, that means that he or she must be a person who has done what you are trying to do in detail. Age, gender, ethnicity, and the like, may not matter when choosing a mentor. What matters is whether or not the mentor knows his or her "onions" in that area.

In choosing a mentor, there are three things that should not be ignored. The first is **prior record of the possible mentor**. What has the person achieved in the field? How much learning has he in it?

Second, **you must understand and accept your would-be mentor's value system**. You must be bold to get answers to questions like; what does she believe? What makes him compromise? Does she understand the full purpose of why she is alive?

Finally, **your would-be mentor must be willing to teach you**. You cannot learn effectively from a secretive teacher. Your

mentor must be willing to show you all that you need to learn for you to succeed.

ⁱ Luke 6:33